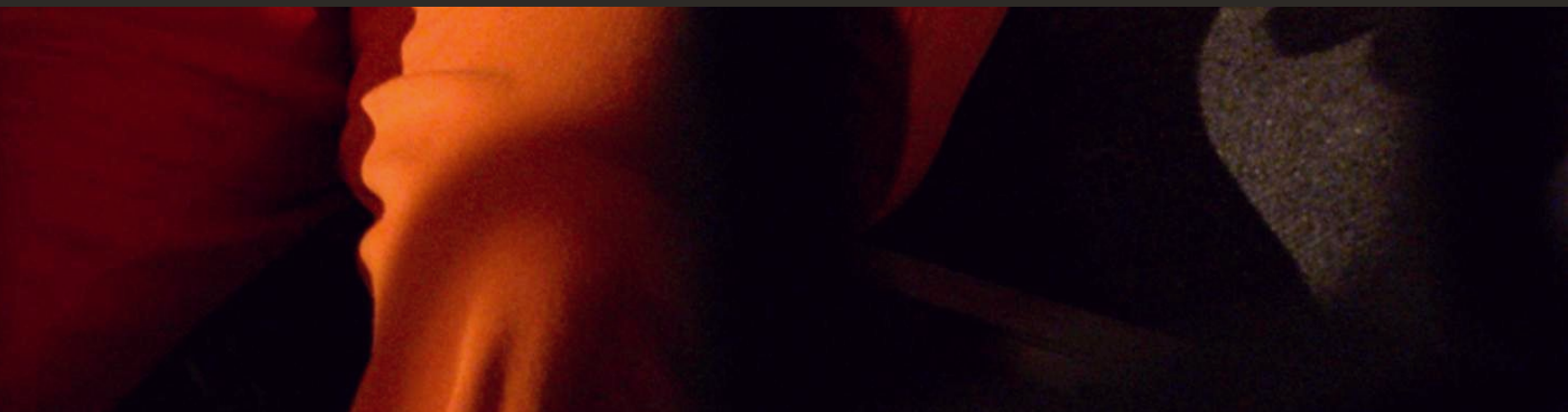
CONCREATES

GUIDE TO DOING TIME; QUARANTINE

Maximizing Your Time and Mind While Locked Down



FOREWORD

Given the present circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, large portions of the world's population have been living under some form of quarantine or lockdown within their communities and homes. At ConCreates, these are conditions that we are well versed in given our respective histories.

As a result, we have assembled this guide, which collectively shares our personal experiences with enduring lockdowns, as well as the methods we used to cope with such difficult situations.

We offer this with the sincere hope that you may draw from our experiences to assist you in coping with the difficult circumstances arising from this global pandemic.

THE CONCREATES TEAM

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RADICAL IDEAS FROM RADICAL THINKERS

Radical
adjective / [rad-i-k*uh*l]
Relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough.

ConCreates is a creative agency powered by incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated individuals. We exist to give radical thinkers the chance to harness their creativity in a positive way, giving brands the diverse, authentic and breakthrough thinking they need and people the second chance they deserve.

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PART 1
ASSESSMENT

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WHERE SOME SEE A BANK ROBBER WE SEE A STRATEGIST

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PART 1—ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

What were you doing when you first heard the news about an illness beginning to spread called the Coronavirus? How long was it until you started to worry about its potential to harm you or your family? How long before you realized that it was a serious health concern, and then, what did you do?

As the threat became more apparent, the stockpiling of grocery items began in earnest. It was only then that many people decided they needed to acquire some basic supplies and necessities. By the time they reached this conclusion, however, it was often too late. Shopping didn't work out too well, as most of the shelves were already empty.

Essentially, the world went on lockdown.

As a result, many found themselves unable to properly prepare for the upcoming orders to shelter-in-place.

Subsequently, the President of the United States declared a national emergency. All across the world, nations initiated various measures of quarantine or lockdown procedures in an attempt to curtail the rampant spread of the virus across the globe.

For millions of people globally, uncertainty loomed, and perhaps for the first time in their lives they began to question their future. Many found themselves forced to reevaluate their priorities and relationships. Many businesses were forced to close, and millions found themselves unemployed overnight.

Many now still find themselves required to "shelter-in-place". Coupled with the uncertainty relating to the ongoing pandemic, this has proven difficult for people to deal with, especially given the overall lack of experience under such circumstances.

This is where we come in; to try to help you make sense of the situation through suggestions, tips, and advice (born of our collective personal experiences), all with the goal of making your "lockdown" experience much easier to handle.

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PART 1—ASSESSMENT

ACCEPTANCE

Certainly, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus and the subsequent lockdown of much of society has been a difficult experience for everyone involved. However, now is the time that we must step up to help ourselves, our family, and our community. It is incumbent upon us to accept the responsibility we've been given and look within ourselves for the strength to do so.

As ConCreators, our life experiences have equipped us for dealing with situations like this. We went from being free men and women to losing our freedom in an instant! Given the nature of our past criminal activities, we can recognize that this was inevitable, but it is still a shock to have your lives change so unexpectedly.

Suddenly, we found ourselves thrust into a situation of uncertainty and had no choice but to quickly accept and adapt in order to begin to move forward.

Accepting what we cannot change is critical, as it leads us down the path to finding solutions for whatever situations life throws at us. Complaining about what has occurred serves no purpose, and is counterproductive.

While incarcerated, this stark reality hits home immediately. Everything about one's life behind bars is dictated by others. The loss of control can initially be startling, but learning to accept and adapt to the new conditions was key to getting through the time.

The same holds true under the current conditions we find ourselves in. Certainly they are not ideal, but accepting them and moving forward must be our first course of action.

Learning to adapt to the new conditions is key to getting through the time.

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SELF-MOTIVATION

Self-motivation is the force that drives you: it's that internal fire that pushes you through when you feel like giving up.

Sometimes that fire sits idle and we find we are not very motivated as a result. This is especially true when life suddenly throws in a whole new set of rules for us to live by.

But it's in times like these when real change actually happens.

Have you ever heard this saying?

> *"You don't change because you see the light, you change because you feel the heat."*

Similar to sitting in jail unexpectedly, sitting in quarantine has a way of forcing you to begin acting a certain way.

Self-motivation is the force that drives you.

Develop Self-Belief

Positive self-belief is the foundation of motivation. In order to strip away the things that hold us back, we've got to envision that we can do it. We have to vividly picture what it looks and feels like.

But the truth is, many of us struggle with negative self-belief. We allow self-doubt to affect our decision making and hold us back.

While there are many layers to every person that need attention, there are a few guidelines you can start with to develop your self-belief.

1. Set bold but realistic goals
2. Stop comparing yourself to others
3. Develop your skills
4. Identify your superpower
5. Create a powerful vision

The roadmap to self-belief and self-confidence is unique for each and every one of us. We must conquer resistance within, envision what we want out of life, and then set some achievable goals to get the momentum going.

This is an essential time to get back to your life's center. Dig deep and get ready to do the work.

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UNTIL NOW, NO ONE HAS TAPPED INTO THE UNIQUE VALUE OUR CREATORS CAN PROVIDE

Deep, authentic understanding of diverse populations.

Unique insights into niche subcultures.

The strong desire and ability to learn new, marketable skills.

A dedication to doing quality work.

An abundance of time to develop creative ideas.

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PART 2

TAKE ACTION

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WHERE SOME SEE A DRUG DEALER

WE SEE AN ENTREPRENEUR

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PART 2—TAKE ACTION

CREATE A PLAN

Creating a plan is the first action step. The key is creating a plan that will work for you. After all, you understand the circumstances relating to you and your family.

The plan you create will take your personal factors into consideration; your personality, your strengths, and your weaknesses - develop your plan around them.

A good way to start is to write everything out that you have to do for work, family and personal matters. Prioritize the list as to importance, figure out how much time each task will need to get done, and then schedule it out accordingly.

Plan For the Week, Then Plan For the Day

One surefire method is to plan for your upcoming week on Sunday, then spend every evening going over your next day plans. Wake up ready to go.

Write the story that you want to live.

Design Your Plan

1. Set Realistic Goals

It's easy to set a goal — we do it all the time. Staying motivated to achieve those goals, well that's a different story.

Consider New Year's resolutions for example — while over 90% of people set them, less than 10% find the self-motivation we talked about to follow through.

2. Set a Timeline

In order to self-motivate, concentrate on setting goals that are achievable. One success can lead to the next goal, and so on, so that any end goal can ultimately be achieved.

3. Know Your Strengths

Do you think with your heart or your head? Do you like taking risks or playing it safe? Evaluate what you're very confident about.

4. Know Your Weaknesses

What are your problem areas? What gives you anxiety to deal with? Remember, once you identify these, you can become more well-rounded.

5. Take Action

You spent time preparing a plan, now execute. A willingness to adapt and learn will take you a long way.

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READING TO OPEN THE MIND

There's nothing like taking a journey through the pages of a book. Whether you crave to learn or you just love to read and let your imagination run wild, reading opens the mind.

If your mind is open, you tend to become more intentional in the areas you spend your energy. Your thoughts become clearer. You increase your ability to focus.

In prison, books are life. They are full of color, full of worlds, and full of hope. Even in the most dreary conditions, when you see the book cart come rolling up on Thursdays, you can't help but get excited.

One of the positive aspects of incarceration is the considerable amount of time one has available to read.

When a person opens a book, he can never be in prison.

Sample Book List

The following books were instrumental in providing motivation to get us to where we are today.

- Shogun
- Good to Great
- The Art of War
- 48 Laws of Power
- To Kill a Mockingbird
- The Scarlet Letter
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck
- Market Like You Mean It
- Manchild in the Promised Land
- The Law of Success
- The Coldest Winter Ever
- Thick Face Black Heart
- Think and Grow Rich
- The Jewish Phenomenon
- Rich Dad Poor Dad

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PART 2—TAKE ACTION

TIME MANAGEMENT

Set a Schedule and Abide by It

In a lockdown situation, understanding that work is separate from other daily activities is an important distinction to make. If you don't find a way to clearly carve out some quiet time to work, you might find yourself headed towards stagnation.

While incarcerated, life is all about routines. You either use it to your advantage or to your detriment. You either find ways to carve out time to seek knowledge and grow, or let the monotony of time crush your ambitions.

Time is one of our most important resources. We must place a high value on every second of our day.

Time Management Tips

First off, create a time audit. Start by finding where your day goes, and get specific. You might be surprised to find out how much time you're spending in between tasks, or how little you're actually getting done during your work hours.

Evaluate the time you spend engaged in "work". Do the hours that you're sitting in front of the computer equate to the amount of meaningful work being made? Set time limits and make sure you take breaks.

Part of time management is managing burnout and mental fatigue.

Sample Schedule

What works for you may vary from what works for others, and this is normal. The important point here is that once you find a schedule that fits your particular circumstances, do your best to abide by it.

Do the time, don't let the time do you!

7:00 Wake up
7:15 Meditate and get centered
7:30 Breakfast
8:30 Work session #1 (with 2 small breaks)
12:30 Lunch and PT
2:30 Work session #2 (with 2 small breaks)
6:30 Dinner time and wind-down

Wind-down time is important and often neglected. Some perfect wind-down activities include journaling, writing, craftwork, listening to music, reading, or watching a movie/show.

Find the schedule that works for you, then stick with it.

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PART 2—TAKE ACTION

CREATING THE OPTIMUM WORK ENVIRONMENT

Many impacted by the shelter-in-place orders have found themselves having to complete work from home. For many, this is an entirely new experience. While the type of work may be the same as what one is used to doing, performing the job while at home does come with its own set of challenges. The following suggestions are designed to help with the transition.

Find a Dedicated Work Location

Despite the limitations of lockdown housing in prison, creating a separate space to work, write, or create, was still important. It helped to create a mindset of work vs. personal time.

Carve out an area of your home to work. If you have an office already then you are set. If you are sharing space or need to carve out a work area, it's time to get resourceful.

We are creatures of habit and:

A dedicated work area will put you in a work mindset.

Organize Your Workspace

1. Purge

First things first, get rid of the things that do not serve a purpose in your workflow or environment. Change always starts with a purge.

2. Tailor Your Workspace

If you typically work with a second monitor, or you need room to manage folders and files, make sure you organize your desk area to accommodate your workflow. Get your layout right.

3. Keep It Clutter-Free

Having a bunch of items sitting on your desk can actually be a distraction to you. Here again, it may benefit you to keep your desk clutter-free so you can laser focus.

4. Prioritize Often

The real estate on your desk is high priced. Prioritize space for documents according to urgency. When work gets backed up it's easy to pile it all up in hopes this stack will remind you to work faster or harder. It usually does the opposite and overwhelms.

5. Reassess weekly

It's easy to get desensitized to our environments. Take a step back every week to look over your work area and make sure everything is where it needs to be.

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PART 3
WELLNESS

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CREATIVITY WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY = CRIMINALITY

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PART 3—WELLNESS

MENTAL HEALTH

Keeping Occupied

During our incarceration, we had a number of activities to keep us busy and sharpen our minds, including chess, Scrabble, and reading materials.

The importance of keeping yourself active during lockdown situations cannot be overstated. It is what made doing time bearable, and it is what will make the current experience better for you now.

The activities mentioned prior served as “escapes” from the conditions we found ourselves in. While engulfed in a novel, we were not inside a prison, but rather in another world experiencing all that it had to offer.

We had access to television but for those looking to expand their minds, the television room wasn’t a priority. You could actually find other like-minded people to build business ideas with; build relationships with.

An idle mind is the Devil’s playground.

STAY CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Keeping connected with friends and family was extremely important for those of us doing time. Receiving even one letter from someone was a big deal.

Humans are social creatures and we all need to be taken care of and loved.

On top of that, constant communication allows you to have more meaningful discussions and talk out some of your stresses. Since we were limited to 15-minute phone calls while inside, we didn’t get to have very deep conversations.

This was one of those parts of the journey where we had to learn how to make do with less.

For those of us still under the shelter-in-place orders, here are some ways to work through the social distancing and stay connected.

1. Stay connected virtually. It is such a blessing that we can video call our loved ones at the push of a button.
2. Be productive online with social media. Say hello, chime in and share your journey. Put yourself out there and get uncomfortable!
3. Learn a new skill with a free online class. You can learn about anything online!
4. Stay positive! In order to do this, you must be full of gratitude!

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are many ways to personally develop yourself while doing time in quarantine. The first step would be to understand *what* and *who* you want to be during this time. Do you want to be a better leader? Would you like to be more spiritually grounded? Would you like to educate yourself on a topic?

This is the journey to being you. Our lives are a quest to understand our identity and place in this world. In order to get closer to our natural state, we've got to get to know ourselves. We've got to take an objective look in the mirror.

Personal Development Aspects

- **Improving Your Self-Awareness**
- **Knowing and Building Your Own Identity**
- **Discovering and Developing Your Talents**

Self-Awareness

Okay, this is where you have to look at yourself objectively. This isn't easy to do but you're going to have to learn how to feel your feelings.

It's okay to feel a variety of ways, even in the thoughts of a negative space. Just don't judge your feelings, try and understand them.

Keep a journal. This can be a major force in one's self-care regimen. Writing is known to improve communication and expand our imagination. Imagine all the ideas we could have written down in a journal!

Keep an open mind and always seek feedback.

Conflict Resolution

Lockdowns can be stressful for people as they are forced to be in close quarters with their household. See, when you're behind the walls you are held to a higher standard of being respectful to those around you.

In the real world it's a free-for-all when it comes to respecting boundaries. The stakes aren't the same.

If you're experiencing tension at home or at work, you have to get a grip on the conflict.

The first step in conflict resolution is recognizing that this is about you. How do you treat the people around you or empathize with someone else's frustrations in lockdown? Do you ask the right questions? How can you be helpful?

Look inward first.

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PART 3—WELLNESS

Self-Talk

Self-talk is something you do naturally during your waking hours, often in your head and sometimes verbally. Positive self-talk occurs when these solo conversations are such that they reflect positively on you or provide you motivation.

While positive self-talk can come natural to some, others may have a tendency towards the opposite, which involves putting oneself down. This negative self-talk can be common during frustrating experiences, which a lockdown situation certainly is.

Negative self-talk can keep you stuck in a negative loop.

The problem with negative self-talk is that it will drag you down and could potentially manifest itself as a self-fulfilling prophecy. You may begin to believe the negative thoughts about yourself, often with very unfortunate consequences. Self-loathing can be the end result, which can be very destructive.

To keep negative feelings at bay, make it a point to allow yourself some self-praise for the good things you do on a regular basis. Give yourself a break. After all, we all deserve it, even when we may not feel we do.

Proper Rest and Hygiene

The importance of proper rest cannot be overstated, especially during stressful times such as these. Having proper rest will assist with your mental health, and help to provide motivation to approach each new day.

Ensure that you set aside the time to get this much needed rest.

Our hygiene is often a direct reflection of how we are feeling. Part of starting a day is preparing yourself, and this can be an important ritual.

Given the lockdown conditions, it may be easy for us to neglect our daily routines; after all, we are at home, so why not lounge about in our pajamas?

The answer to this lies in our mindset.

Getting ready for work in the morning signals our brains to get ready for that activity. Lounging about in pajamas can have a very different affect, wherein all you may want to do is go back to bed.

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PHYSICAL HEALTH

Mental Benefits of Physical Exercise

Physical exercise has a multitude of benefits as it relates to mental and physical well-being. Studies have shown that physical activity reduces stress and increases your overall mood, energy and mental state.

In a lockdown situation, staying physically active is one of the most productive ways to keep our mind and body in a healthy state. In our current situation, with orders to stay at home, it is no different.

For those of you accustomed to going to a gym or taking a fitness class to stay active, you must seek out new methods to maintain a healthy routine. If you haven't been physically active prior to doing time in quarantine, now is the time to start.

Additional benefits of physical exercise includes the will to thrive. It develops the discipline and work ethic needed to get through your day. Physical exercise also contributes to restful sleep, which in turn boosts your overall immune function.

These benefits are all very important in maintaining optimum health, especially during periods of limited mobility like we are now experiencing.

Use What You've Got

Before you engage in a fitness routine, it is essential to perform an assessment of your current physical health and your current living conditions. The purpose of this is to evaluate your spatial constraints, and to reach an understanding of what you can use to build a suitable routine.

Determine an area or space in your home where you will be able to conduct a physical exercise routine without distraction. Your routine should be included in the daily schedule you created. Ensure the space is free of hazards or anything that would prohibit a productive workout.

Last but not least, determine what you have in your home that can be used to substitute for workout equipment.

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Developing a Routine

The goal of designing or utilizing a five-day regimen is to target all muscle groups for a total body workout. We have provided an example of what a 5-day regimen will look like in a confined space.

Be mindful to harness your inner Macgyver and utilize your basic household products to substitute for weights. Those reusable Walmart and Trader Joe's bags make for great dumbbells once filled; you can use can goods or water bottles to get to it. If you're really clever, tie them to a broom handle.

Monday *Chest*	500 push-ups 20 sets of 25
Tuesday *Arms*	147 curls (21's) 7 sets of 21
Wednesday *Shoulders & Back*	100 deadlifts 10 sets of 10
Thursday *Legs*	500 body squats 20 sets of 25
Friday *Cardio*	100 Burpees 10 sets of 10

Full-Body Workout: The Burpee

The burpee is a full-body strength training exercise. They're easy to do and can be done just about anywhere.

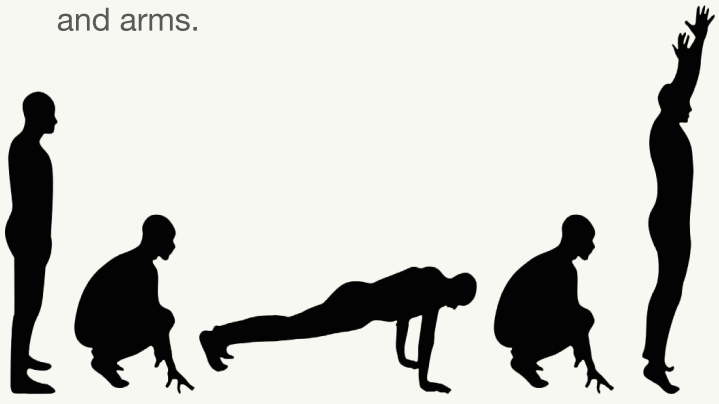
Burpees will leave you gassed after just a few. Your chest, arms and legs will be on fire after you complete a set.

Because you're using your full body when doing burpees and because they're such an intense workout, the burpee is one of the best exercises to burn fat.

How To Do a Burpee

1. Begin in a standing position.
2. Move into a squat position with your hands on the ground. (count 1)
3. Kick your feet back into a plank position while keeping your arms extended. (count 2)
4. Immediately return your feet into squat position. (count 3)
5. Stand up from the squat position. (count 4)

**Throw in the the push-up at the bottom if you want to work your chest, shoulders and arms.



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PART 4
CREATIVITY

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WHERE SOME SEE A GRAFFITI ARTIST

WE SEE AN ART DIRECTOR

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PART 4—CREATIVITY

UNLOCKING YOUR CREATIVITY

Observe

Given our current lockdown, many of us have nothing but time on our hands. Consider utilizing this time to consume content created by experts in fields related to your passion – memes, videos, blogs, etc. Observe their final products and draw inspiration from them.

Journaling

Journaling has been proven to be a therapeutic process, and if you've ever journaled for a long period of time, you'll have felt the positive effects.

Prison was definitely not the place where we would openly talk about our feelings. This is why journaling proved to be so worthwhile for those who practiced it, as it was a means by which to express oneself privately.

What are you most passionate about?

What drives your economic engine?

What do you feel you can do better than anyone in the world?

Understanding these things is important, as it will provide you the direction on how to focus your efforts for success.

Given the current crisis we are experiencing, if you are feeling like you need to get out of your head, then consider keeping a journal.

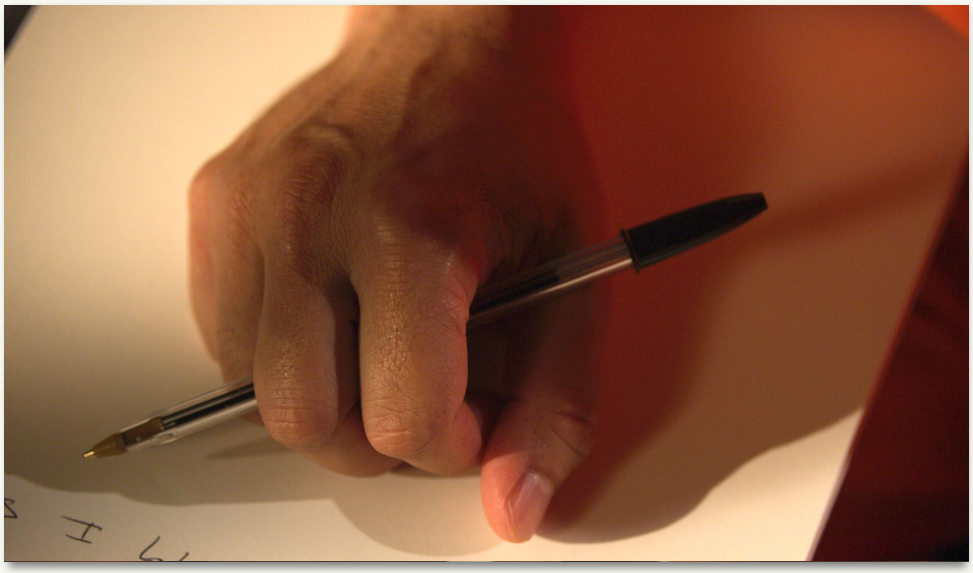
Another option is to consider visual journaling. Given the high-tech world we live in (that we could not experience while locked up), this could prove to be an easy way to introduce journaling into your routine.

This is accomplished by creating mood and vision boards using images that can be pulled from the Internet.

The simple steps for doing so are included, below:

Visual Journaling

- Open Google Slides
- Create a new file
- Set it in landscape mode
- Browse the web for photos to add
- Build your vision board!



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DEEP WORK

(The following is inspired by the book *Deep Work* by Cal Newport.)

We all have our plates full. Many of us are now forced to work out of our homes, dealing with the many distractions that come with it. This is an experience that is new to most.

The fact that we are at home makes it much more likely that we can get distracted. Be honest with yourself, even when you are at work, avoiding social media could sometimes be a challenge. While in our own homes, this type of distraction can potentially be much more significant.

One of the interesting things about doing time in prison was that we lived free of many of the distractions that are commonplace today. This was because so many decisions were made for us, of course, and as such they were out of our control. That, and the fact that social media platforms were not readily available for us to access.

In order to accomplish your tasks and goals, shut down the distractions.

Everybody works differently and there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to productivity hacks. What works for one may not work for the next. One thing is certain, however – in a world full of distractions, it's clearly becoming more difficult to focus.

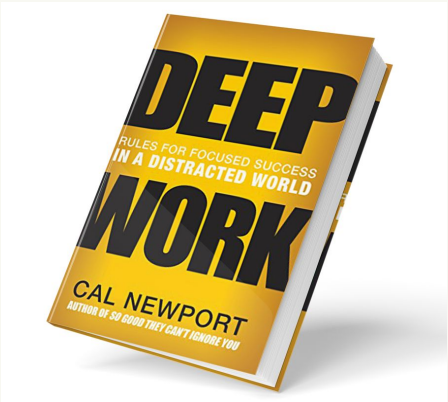
Deep work is the process of setting aside blocks of time in order for you to reach deep levels of mental clarity and concentration. It's these pockets of time where you focus on high priority projects and produce meaningful work.

This concept relates back to the importance of goals, planning and scheduling, that we discussed prior. During the schedule creation, give consideration to the blocks of time that can be carved out in order to complete your most important work. During this time block, dedicate yourself fully to the task at hand.

As you become more intentional with how you spend your time, you will begin to gain a better understanding of what is important to you. These efforts will create new value, improve your skills, and are difficult to replicate.

RECOMMENDED READING

Deep Work by Cal Newport



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AFTERWORD

We've received an enormous amount of phone calls, emails, and text messages from people all over the world having a hard time coping with the circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the motivation that spurred the creation of the *Guide To Doing Time; Quarantine,* with the goal of providing unique information from the perspective of incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated men and women.

At ConCreates, we recognize the need for people to feel both connected and useful during these troubling times, and given our unique experience, we were inclined to offer our help in this manner.

We sincerely wish the best for you and your families during this crisis.

THE CONCREATES TEAM

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CONCREATES

RADICAL IDEAS FROM RADICAL THINKERS

Talk To Us, We Talk Back

We find inspiration from the world's creativity, and if you can find a bit of creative inspiration out of what we do, let's collaborate.

Share with us your quarantine tips and let your people know you are thinking about them during these difficult times.

@concre8tes

#Quarantinetips #Checkonyourpeople #Brilliancebehindbars #Brilliancebeyondbars

www.concreates.com info@concreates.com

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